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ABSTRACT

This report explores how sociocultural factors affect reading engagement, literacy learning, and achievement among a diverse group of learners. The report examines previous theory and research on motivation in the area of reading (reading engagement) from a sociocultural perspective. It describes a study that examined the issue of reading engagement with 18 third-grade Spanish-speaking children and families in an impoverished southern California inner city school--specifically, the relationship between sociocultural factors (organizational features of families' daily living routines) and student reading engagement. It states that the overall purpose of the study was to examine the issue of literacy engagement in "at-risk" children. Case studies also were used to illustrate how reading motivation is embedded in daily practices and how accounts of reading motivation that are focused strictly on the individual in isolation may miss the complexity of factors that are integral aspects of students' reading and later literacy development. Includes 3 figures, 4 tables, and 2 notes. (Contains 71 references.) (NKA)

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CIERA REPORT

Engaged Reading: A Multilevel Approach to Considering Sociocultural Factors With Diverse Learners

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August 13, 2001

CIERA
Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement

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CIERA Inquiry 1: Readers and Texts
How do sociocultural factors affect reading engagement, literacy learning, and achievement among a diverse group of learners?

This report examines previous theory and research on motivation in the area of reading (reading engagement) from a sociocultural perspective. It describes a study that examined the issue of reading engagement with eighteen third-grade Spanish-speaking children and families in an impoverished Southern California inner-city school—specifically, the relationship between sociocultural factors (organizational features of the classroom and after-school program and empirically assessed features of families' daily living routines) and student reading engagement. Case studies also were used to illustrate how reading motivation is embedded in daily practices and how accounts of reading motivation that are focused strictly on the individual in isolation may miss the complexity of factors that are integral aspects of students' reading and later literacy development.

In this paper, we present data focusing on sociocultural factors in reading engagement from a larger study of Latino immigrant students in an urban, central city location. We first discuss the literature on reading engagement.

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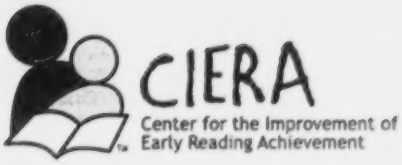

provide an analysis of past work, and propose a socioculturally-based extension to the current conceptualizations of motivation and reading engagement. We then use these data to argue for a broader, more dynamic, and context-sensitive conceptualization of the reading engagement construct, and discuss the applicability of this perspective to consideration of literacy development and the reading achievement of diverse learners in nonmainstream settings.

A version of this report appears in D. M. McInerny & S. Van Etten (Eds.), *Research on sociocultural influences on motivation and learning* (Vol. 1, pp. 251-264). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

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Engaged Reading: A Multilevel Approach to Considering Sociocultural Factors With Diverse Learners[1]

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Literature Review

The Affective Dimensions of Reading: Research on Reading Engagement

A great deal of research on literacy and reading in particular has focused on the cognitive aspects of reading (see for example Adams, 1990; Barr, Kamil, Mosenthal, & Pearson, 1991; Ruddell, Ruddell, & Singer, 1994, for reviews of this work). However, researchers and theoreticians have begun to reconsider the balance between cognitive and affective (specifically motivational) aspects of reading and literacy (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; McCombs, 1989). It has become increasingly evident that purely cognitive accounts of reading behavior are incomplete: Just because someone is able to engage in a behavior does not mean that he or she will be willing to do so. This is especially true with students who are thought to be at-risk for academic failure (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Interest in the affective components of reading and literacy has inspired researchers to try to (a) comprehend the understandings, interests, and materials students bring to school, (b) grasp how those understandings and interests interact with different literacy contexts and activities, and (c) discern how schools and intervention programs can appropriate and build upon these understandings and interests to ensure engagement and success-

ful literacy development (Baker, Afflerbach, & Reinking, 1996). However, only a small part of this work has focused specifically on students of diverse backgrounds. Fundamental to understanding this work is how some students in at-risk conditions become proficient and avid readers even under adverse circumstances. Why do some students become engaged and motivated readers while others do not?

A Cognitive Account of Motivation

In general, motivation theorists focus their work on the "whys" of human behavior (Weiner, 1992). Cognitive theorists of motivation propose a clear relation between beliefs, attitudes, and values as mediators of task engagement (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, in press). That is, the extent to which one engages in a task depends upon beliefs about one's own competence or self-efficacy, the extent to which one values a given task, and whether that value is intrinsic or extrinsic in origin (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Motivation researchers see these individual beliefs, values, and goals for achievement as critical determinants of achievement-related behavior (Weiner, 1992; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992). These constructs can be conceptualized as a series of questions an individual asks themselves with respect to a given activity or task (Wigfield, 1997), including

- Can I succeed?
- Do I want to succeed and why? and
- What do I need to do to succeed?

Researchers in this area have developed a number of motivational constructs to describe how they relate to various achievement behaviors. These include perceptions of ability and self-efficacy, task values, achievement goals, control beliefs, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and achievement attributions (Rigby, Deci, Patrick, & Ryan, 1992; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992).

Motivation Research Applied to Reading: Reading Engagement

Researchers at the National Reading Research Center have been especially influential in translating the research on motivation to the domain of reading and literacy and emphasizing the affective (motivational) factors as essential characteristics of reading. This work builds on theories of motivation, knowledge acquisition, cognition, and social development. From this perspective, an engaged reader is one who is motivated, knowledgeable, strategic, and socially interactive (Baker, Afflerbach et al., 1996; Gambrell, 1996; Guthrie, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). The engaged reader is viewed as motivated to read for diverse purposes, an active knowledge constructor, an effective user of cognitive strategies, and a participant in social interactions (Guthrie, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997, 2000).

Wigfield and colleagues (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1995; Wigfield & McCann, in press) have been especially influential in bringing to reading research a cog-

nitive perspective that emphasizes children's beliefs, attitudes, and values. They have focused on elaborating the construct of engagement, developing valid ways to assess the different dimensions of reading motivation, and building individual developmental profiles and markers. Defining reading engagement as the integration of motivations, strategies, conceptual knowledge, and social interaction during reading activities provides the key elements of a theoretical framework for reading engagement.

The Role of Context and Sociocultural Factors in Reading Engagement

A review of the literature on motivation reveals that the focus is primarily on individual characteristics. However, the work on motivation in general as well as reading engagement work in particular seems increasingly to recognize the importance of social context to motivation (Ames, 1992). For example, some of the characteristics of instructional contexts found to increase intrinsic motivation include social interaction and freedom for the learner (Blumenfeld, 1992; Turner, 1995), practicing real-world literacy tasks (Newby, 1991), and providing learning strategies (Guthrie, McGough, Bennett, & Rice, 1996). Reflecting on this broader perspective, some authors have discussed characteristics of classroom contexts that impact motivation, such as social relationships, task values, and home-school partnerships (Baker, Allen et al., 1996; Guthrie & McCann, 1997; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Sonnenschein, Brody, & Munsterman, 1996; Wentzel, 1998; Wigfield, Eccles, & Rodriguez, 1998).

During the late 1980s and 1990s, cognitive theories were challenged on the basis of the balance they construed between individual and sociocultural factors and on their relatively minor concern for the role of the social context in the learning process. Social constructivist or sociocultural theories have proposed a much tighter connection between cognitive (including motivational) and sociocultural factors, viewing them as highly interdependent (Rueda & Dembo, 1995). In this view, motivation is not a characteristic of the individual as much as a socially negotiated cultural norm that "results in an observable manifestation of interest and cognitive and affective engagement" (Sivan, 1986, p. 210).

A Sociocultural View of Motivation and Reading Engagement

A sociocultural view of motivation focuses on social features of the task and setting as well as cultural-historical factors as they are embedded in both the activities and the social organization of the context. The theoretical underpinnings of this work are found in neo-Vygotskian theories of learning and development (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Wertsch, 1991, 1998). Motivation, like other psychological characteristics in this view, is less a feature of the individual than a property of the interaction of both the individual and the social context in a dynamic interplay (Oldfather & Dahl, 1994; Oldfather, West, White, & Wilmarth, 1999; Rueda & Dembo, 1995; Rueda & Moll, 1994; Sivan, 1986).

In general, sociocultural theorists interested in learning and development emphasize the role of culturally organized, socially mediated practices in children's maturational processes. A key feature of a sociocultural perspective, then, is the shift of the unit of analysis from the isolated individual to the individual in interaction with and within the larger sociocultural context. This shift is especially important for students from nontraditional and diverse backgrounds. It may explain the variability in achievement patterns of these students in comparison to norms in the wider society. Moreover, it helps account for the sometimes significant differences in student interest, motivation, and engagement as a function of different activities and settings. Thus, from this approach, the values, beliefs, and attitudes that have been found to be associated with motivated behaviors are no longer seen as individual characteristics but produced in interaction with the social context.

Recent extensions of sociocultural theory have included the view that learning and development occur in a dynamic process of transformation of participation in a specific sociocultural community. That is, learning occurs as one's level of engagement and participation change over time in accordance with a growing understanding of the task, its meanings, and the beliefs and values embedded in them. Further, participation in any sociocultural activity, including reading and literacy, occurs on many planes or levels. Rogoff's framework (1994, 1995; Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa, & Goldsmith, 1995) proposes that a complete account of learning and development must take into account three levels:

- The *personal plane* involves individual cognition, emotion, behavior, values, and beliefs. In educational research, this might correspond to studies of individual student or teacher actions, psychological characteristics, or competence.

- The *interpersonal* or *social plane* includes communication, role performances, dialogue, cooperation, conflict, assistance, and assessment. In educational research, this is often addressed in studies of teaching/learning interactions, such as a study of cooperative learning groups.

- The *community* or *institutional plane* involves shared history, languages, rules, values, beliefs, and identities. This is sometimes addressed in studies of entire schools, districts, professions, neighborhoods, tribes, or cultures, and the ways that these "common sociocultural inheritances" interact with other levels of development.

Sociocultural theory emphasizes the interdependence of the three planes. While one plane might be "foregrounded" for analysis, a complete account of learning and development considers all three. In practice, the smallest unit of analysis which contains all three planes simultaneously is the activity setting, or the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the routines that constitute everyday life in and out of school (Tharp, 1997).

An Analysis of Reading Engagement Research

Our examination of the current literature on motivation and reading engagement suggests that the majority of investigations are confined to a single plane of development, most notably the individual plane. A great deal of the

work on motivation and reading engagement has focused on the individual dimensions of the construct, even though recent models recognize the need to consider the role of social interaction and, to a lesser extent, the role of the immediate social context (Baker, Afflerbach et al., 1996; Baker, Allen et al., 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Sonnenschein et al., 1996; Thompson, Mixon, & Serpell, 1996). Little work in the area of reading motivation and engagement has examined motivational issues from all three relevant dimensions: the individual (cognitive), social-interactional, and cultural-historical level.

One approach that has been helpful in considering all three planes of development is the ecological/cultural (hereafter ecocultural) approach (Weisner, 1984). Ecocultural theory assumes that adaptation by any group, regardless of size, involves balancing ecology (resources, constraints), culture (beliefs, values, and schemata), and the needs and abilities of family members in the organization of daily routines (Arzubiaga, Ceja, & Artiles, 2000; Gallimore, Weisner, Kaufman, & Bernheimer, 1989). In this manner, a broader view of family life, inclusive of the three planes of development, emerges. The child is no longer examined out of context, but is rather seen as a dynamic member of a family, which in turn is engaged in constructing a tenable living within its environment. From this approach, motivation and reading engagement are socially constructed practices produced through daily routines negotiated by families as they attempt to live by their values and beliefs, with the resources they possess and the constraints they face. The examples from our work discussed later in this paper suggest that individual children's motivation, reading engagement, and performance outcomes are associated with a variety of family practices that are organized as a response to cultural and ecological factors. Sociocultural studies of motivation and reading engagement in classroom contexts must also consider the interdependent roles of students and social contexts, including the relationships students have with teachers, the type and distribution of activities in which they engage, the language of instruction, and the status differences among children. The examples of classroom contexts and their impact on motivation and reading engagement that we provide later suggest that broader factors shape and/or are related to the kinds of experiences that students have in classrooms, suggesting that motivation cannot be isolated from the social context shaping daily experiences.

As the psychological and educational literature begins to broaden the research base to include social-interactional and community/institutional factors, the universality of motivation to read and reading engagement will be reconceptualized as well. The transformation in conceptualization will result in an understanding of motivation grounded in context.

When presumably universal constructs (such as motivation and reading engagement) are viewed in the context of individuals or groups whose sociocultural characteristics and histories diverge from mainstream society, the large role these sociocultural factors play becomes evident and determines how these constructs will be developed and displayed (see Baker, Afflerbach et al., 1996). Thus far, however, only a few investigators have looked at highly diverse populations in low socioeconomic status (SES) settings (Gambrell & Morrow, 1996) or the cultural dimensions of motivation (e.g., Graham, 1994; McInerney, 1992, 1995). Most work in this area has focused either on school achievement in general, systematically avoiding

reading, or on older students and adults (McInerney, Roche, McInerney, & Marsh, 1997). A widening of the populations studied may result in a more robust test of the generalizability of the constructs under discussion.

The findings we present in the next section are based on work we have been conducting in a Latino immigrant community in the central city of a large southwestern metropolitan area.[2] The data relating children's reading motivation to family and classroom contexts exemplify that reading engagement is a function of the interaction of multiple factors. Specifically, we present a brief analysis of the nature of the classroom settings that constitute the social context of literacy instruction for the students we studied. This analysis addresses the relationship between features of the sociocultural context and student engagement. We then present an analysis that focuses on ecocultural factors, specifically family factors, as they relate to reading engagement. Finally, we present brief case descriptions of two students who fall at opposite ends of the continuum with respect to reading engagement and discuss the results in the context of reading engagement research. Before moving to this section, we provide a brief description of our methods of data collection.

Method

Study Description

The overall purpose of the study was to examine the issue of literacy engagement in "at-risk" children. As part of work conducted under the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA), the study targeted 21 poor non-English speaking Latina/o children (first and second graders at the start of the study) within classroom, home, and community contexts. The children were all students at the neighborhood school of one of the most impoverished inner-city communities in Southern California. They were asked to participate after consideration of initial classroom observations, teacher ratings and recommendations, and school grades and records. Table 1 contains relevant characteristics of these students' families.

A wide range of data have been collected on these students, including individual assessments of motivation to read, school file data (test scores, grades, teacher comments), teacher perceptions of students' motivation to read, classroom observations (field notes), focus groups and interviews with teachers and parents, and home visits. The study's overall design was meant to incorporate all of the planes of development described earlier. Given the focus on sociocultural factors in this report, we present data on the interactional features of the instructional settings and data from the larger home/community domain.

Table 1: Family Characteristics*

Family Type	Country of Origin	Yrs in U.S.	Parents' Occupation	No. of children in family	Target Child Gender	Target Child Grade (age)
Nuclear						
Mother	El Salvador	11	Garment (piecework)	3	Male	1st (6)
Father	U.S.	11	Garment (operator)			
Nuclear						
Mother	Mexico	—	Garment (operator)	—	Female	1st (6)
Father	Mexico	—	Garment (operator)			
Three Generation						
Mother	Mexico	12	Housekeeping	4	Male	1st (6)
Functional Father	Mexico	12	Butcher			
Grandparents	Mexico	—	Unemployed			
Three Generation						
Mother	El Salvador	12	Garment (piecework)	3	Male	2nd (7)
Functional Father	Mexico	13	Construction		Male	1st (6)
Grandmother	El Salvador	7	Unemployed			
Nuclear						
Mother	Mexico	12	Homemaker	4	Male	1st (6)
Functional Father	Mexico	5	Garment (operator)			
Nuclear						
Mother	Mexico	—	Housekeeping	—	Male	1st (6)
Nuclear						
Mother	Mexico	21	Garment (piecework)	2	Female	1st (6)
Father	Mexico	21	Factory Packing			
Nuclear						
Mother	Mexico	—	Homemaker	3	Male	1st (6)
Father	Mexico		Garment (piecework)			
Nuclear						
Mother	Mexico	10	Garment (piecework)	2	Female	1st (6)
Functional Father	Mexico	22	Disabled			
Nuclear						
Mother	Mexico	10	Garment (piecework)	2	Male	2nd (7)
Father	Mexico	18	Demolition			
Nuclear						
Mother	Mexico	18	Garment (piecework)	2	Male	2nd (7)
Father	Mexico	18	Garment (distributor)			
Nuclear						
Mother	Mexico	20	Secretary	3	Female	2nd (7)
Nuclear						
Mother	Mexico	8	Garment (piecework)	2	Male	2nd (7)
Father	Mexico	14	Garment (piecework)			
Nuclear						
Mother	Mexico	20	Garment (piecework)	5	Female	2nd (7)
Father	Mexico	21	Parking attendant			
Nuclear						
Mother	El Salvador	28	McDonald's	1	Female	2nd (7)

Table 1: Family Characteristics*

Family Type	Country of Origin	Yrs in U.S.	Parents' Occupation	No. of children in family	Target Child Gender	Target Child Grade (age)
Nuclear Mother Father	El Salvador U.S.	11 11	Garment (piecework) Garment (operator)	3	Male	1st (6)
Nuclear Mother Father	Mexico Mexico	11 11	Garment (piecework) Garment (piecework)	3	Female	2nd (7)
Extended Mother Father Aunt Friends (2)	Mexico Mexico Mexico —	21 21 — —	Garment (supervisor) Maintenance Unemployed Unemployed	5	Female	2nd (7)
Three Generation Mother Grandfather	Mexico Mexico	14 —	Garment (piecework) —	3	Female	2nd (7)
Nuclear Mother Father	Mexico Mexico	18 20	Garment (piecework) Garment (piecework)	4	Male	2nd (7)
Nuclear Mother Father	El Salvador El Salvador	10 9	Salesperson Busboy and factory work	2	Male	2nd (7)

* Note: "—" indicates missing data

Data Sources

Data on the 21 children were collected during a three-year period through a variety of sources described below. Because of the mobility of this population, the measures below focused on 18 students and families for whom data was complete.

Ethnographic fieldnotes

In order to examine students' instructional contexts, we observed in the classrooms and in an after-school program where many of the students spent time. Field notes were recorded throughout the first and part of the second year of the study and focused on language arts and reading. Observers (trained doctoral students) visited classrooms as often as 2-3 times a week (but more often once a week) when school was in session and no unusual activities (e.g., school rallies) were taking place. Observations lasted an average of 30 minutes and focused on instructional practices and activities surrounding literacy and reading. Research assistants took careful notes during observations and expanded upon them later.

Initial analysis of the field notes followed a schema described by Turner (1995) that characterizes classroom activities on a dimension she referred to as open/closed. Turner describes open tasks as those in which students themselves can select relevant information and/or can decide how to use information to solve a problem. Open tasks allow children to frame the problem and design a solution (e.g., students selecting their own books for free reading). Closed tasks are those in which either the task or the teacher

delineate the information to be used as well as the expected solution (i.e., one right answer is expected). That is, students are directed to use specific information to come to a predetermined conclusion—a structure that offers students limited opportunities to make decisions. The goal of closed activities is automatic application of practiced skills. In our study, closed activities included things like practice activities and worksheet exercises. We found several instances in the data where activities shared aspects of both codes. We therefore categorized these as "mixed."

We also conducted home visits with 10 families. Most families were visited between 5 and 10 times. Home visits averaged approximately three hours and included participant observation in family daily activities, including having dinner, doing homework, and going shopping. Field notes for home visits were written immediately after leaving the site.

Interviews and focus groups

Two focus groups with the students' classroom teachers, two focus groups with parents, and individual interviews with two teachers and the school principal also inform this paper. Interviews were semistructured and covered factors that seemed to impact students' motivation to read and reading achievement, parental values for school, and home and school literacy activities. All were audiorecorded and transcribed.

Reading motivation measures

Motivation assessments were administered to the teachers and students. The teachers completed the Teachers' Perceptions of Student Reading Motivation Questionnaire (Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998). The instrument consists of 31 items rated on a 4-point scale. Some items were omitted from analysis in this study based on pilot testing and the aims of the study. (The items excluded were 2, 11, 13, 17, 20, 24, and 25.) The remaining 24 items on the questionnaire were grouped into six composite scores representing six separate constructs: activity, autonomy, social, topic, individual, and writing. Table 2 presents the items that constituted each factor.

Students were administered the Student Motivation to Read Profile (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). The questionnaire consists of 20 items and uses a 4-point response scale. The survey assesses two specific dimensions of reading motivation: self-concept as a reader (10 items) and value of reading (10 items). The self-concept items obtain information about students' self-perceived competence in reading and self-perceived performance relative to peers. The value of reading items obtain information about the value students place on reading tasks and activities.

EFI (Ecocultural Family Interview)

We used the EFI to unpack families' daily routines with an ecocultural lens. This instrument encourages parents to talk about the dynamic balance between resources and constraints by blending multiple research traditions in a guided conversation and questionnaire format using both open-ended and direct, structured questions. The EFI interview comprises ten ecocultural domains defined theoretically (Weisner, 1984), operationalized for Euro-American families (Nihira, Weisner, & Bernheimer, 1994) and adapted for Latino immigrants (EFI-LI) through extensive interviews with a random sample of 120 families (Arzubiaga, Ceja, & Artiles, 2000; Coots & Arzubiaga, 1997; Weisner, Coots, Bernheimer, & Arzubiaga, 1997). Additional items based on current literature and our own ethnographic data with this sample and focusing on literacy and school-related practices were included.

Table 2: Domains and Items on the Teachers' Perceptions of Student Reading Motivation Questionnaire

Activity	• Enjoys reading about a favorite activity • Follows up reading by getting involved in a related activity • Does better on reading and writing when related to activities he/she has participated in • Reads frequently about a specialized recreational or extracurricular activity
Autonomy	• Is content to read books that are preselected by the teacher • Prefers finding his/her own books to read • Knows how to choose a book he/she would want to read • Does better work when allowed to choose books that interest him/her
Social	• Talks about his/her feelings related to a book or story • Avoids participating in reading group activities • Engages in complex discussion with teachers/peers, including motivations, plot, and personal response • Does better in reading and writing activities when working with peers
Topic	• Has definite preferences for favorite topics or authors • Has no specialized reading interest • Spends a long time reading about topics he/she likes • Chooses to read about favorite topics
Individual	• Is easily distracted while reading • Is a voracious reader • "Hides" in books • Is easily discouraged when he/she encounters difficult text • Is enthusiastic about reading
Writing	• Writes personal responses in journal regularly and often • Wants to write about what he/she reads • Writes incompletely or superficially in journal

The ecocultural factors considered were immigration, culture and language, instrumental knowledge, nurturance, and workload. The items constituting each factor are found in Table 3. A high score on immigration indicates that the family is making changes to adapt to the host country and may hold positive views regarding these adaptations. A high score on culture and language indicates that the family reports active pursuit of Spanish and English literacy and cultural activities. A high score on instrumental knowledge shows that the family has access to and/or knowledge about institutions, including schools. A high score on nurturance suggests that the family spends time together and views encouragement and affective emotional support as important. Finally, a high score on workload indicates that the family has a complex, heavy domestic and childcare workload. It was hypothesized that ecocultural factors would relate to children's motivation to read and reading achievement.

Achievement measures

In addition, teachers were asked to assess individual children's reading on a 5-point scale and their achievement on a 3-point scale. These two items were from the Teacher Perceptions measure described earlier. After rating

the child on 31 items related to reading engagement, the teacher was asked to indicate both an achievement level for the student and a the grade this child would receive in reading if a grade were reported at this time (on a A-F scale).

Table 3: Domains and Items on the Ecocultural Family Interview

Immigration	• Effect of immigration on subsistence base • Effect of maintaining a home in country of origin • Degree of acculturation of couple • Effects of bringing up children in another country • Family's views and goals for integration to another country
Culture and Language	• Family encouragement of Spanish and English language and culture • Religious literacy activities • Use of media in English and Spanish • Esteem of bilingualism
Instrumental Knowledge	• Family's access to and knowledge about school • Family's use of social services • Political involvement
Nurturance	• Activities and time shared by family members • Family's attempts to provide an emotionally affective environment • Instillation of religious values • Encouragement about school and academic future
Workload	• Degree of complexity involved in childcare • Degree of complexity in domestic workload • Number of young children

In the following section, we first examine organizational features in the classroom and after-school program and relate these to features of student engagement. Next, we analyze families' ecocultural features as they relate to children's reading engagement and present two case studies. The case studies serve to illustrate how reading motivation is embedded in daily practices and how cognitive accounts of reading motivation may miss the complexity of factors that are integral aspects of students' reading.

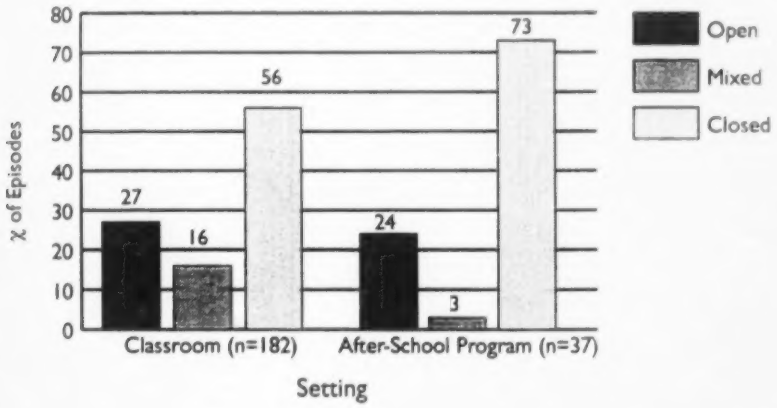
Results

The Role of the Instructional Social Context in Engagement

In examining motivation and engagement in classroom contexts, we were particularly interested in the types of activities in which children were asked to engage and in how these activities contributed to their engagement. As discussed earlier, researchers have found motivation to be particularly influ-

enced by task variables. We were able to identify 223 instances in our notes where activity settings were described in enough detail to be coded as open, mixed, or closed. The results of the analysis are presented in Figure 1. The figure indicates that children had access to more closed than open activity settings.

Figure 1. Percentage of activities by type (open, mixed, and closed) in two settings (classroom and after-school program)



Although we had initially hypothesized that the after-school program would afford more open than closed activities because it was not a formal learning setting, we found that this was not the case. The program was structured such that children worked on homework first, followed by various types of structured activities, followed by free play time.

In Turner's (1995) original analysis, she compared whole language and basal reader instructional settings. She found that the whole language setting had a smaller percentage of closed activities (27%) than the basal reader setting (77%). The classrooms we observed were somewhere in the middle, at 43% closed activities. The after-school program was more similar to the basal reader context studied by Turner (73% closed activities).

As a next step, we reviewed notes to examine the issue of engagement. Level of engagement was coded as "engaged," "somewhat engaged," and "not engaged" for all instances categorized as open/closed and mixed. In coding for engagement, we looked for evidence of criteria specified by Turner (1995), such as the use of learning strategies, the use of reading strategies, persistence, and volitional control. We hypothesized that engagement would be relatively higher in open than in closed activities.

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the breakdown by setting. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of open/closed/mixed activities observed. Figure 3 shows to what extent children were engaged depending on the open/closed/mixed nature of the activity. All activities coded are represented separately (100% of open activities, 100% of closed, same for mixed and the percent of students showing different levels of engagement for each type of activity). While levels of engagement were somewhat higher in open than closed activities in the regular classroom, the difference was not great. Moreover, this pattern

did not hold in the after-school program, where engagement was somewhat higher in the closed settings.

Figure 2. Level of student engagement by type of activity (open, closed, mixed) in the classroom setting

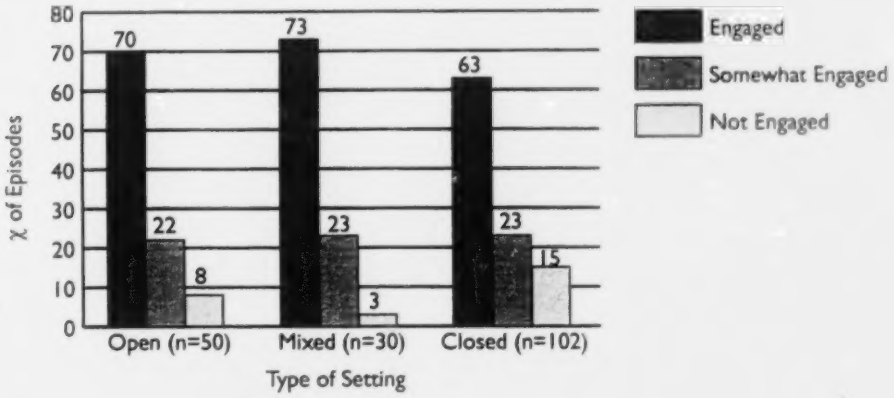
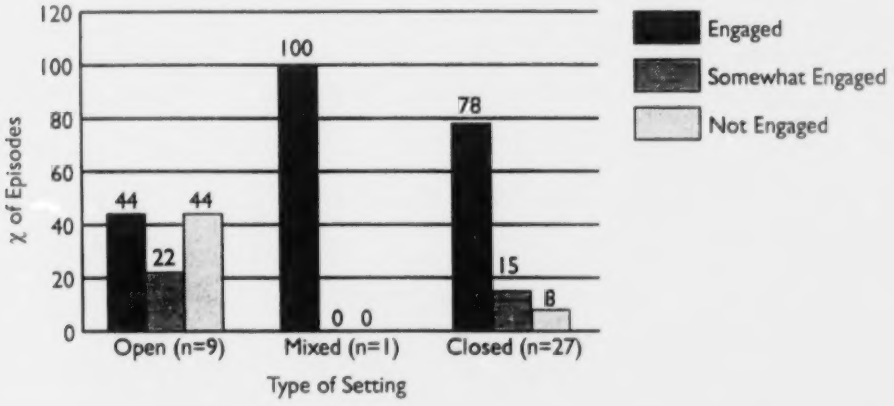


Figure 3. Level of engagement by type of activity in an after-school program



With few exceptions, most of the teachers in whose rooms we observed were on emergency credentials. (In the state of California, the shortage of teachers in some communities has led to provisions for teachers to work without being fully credentialed while they pursue further training.) Overall, our observations suggested that, although the teachers were hard-working and committed, few activities had any elements of authenticity—that is, recognized by students as meaningful and serving a particular purpose. Much of the classroom work was characterized by drill and practice activities, worksheets, and teacher-directed work. As many authors have noted, such instruction often characterizes the education of students from low SES and non-English speaking backgrounds (Thompson et al., 1996). Childrens' engagement under these types of instructional conditions has important

theoretical and practical implications, which we will explore in the discussion section.

The Relation of Ecocultural Factors, Reading Motivation, and Achievement

As described earlier, interviews were conducted to assess the relationship between reading motivation and ecocultural family resources and constraints, values, and goals, as well as family efforts to deal with daily routines and circumstances. The means for the ecocultural factors (with standard deviations in parentheses and range [minimum and maximum]) were as follows: immigration, 14.7 (4.34), range 6-22; nurturance, 25.89 (5.37), range 17-35; instrumental knowledge, 16.17 (5.97), range 4-27; culture and language, 28.61 (6.73), range 14-38; and workload, 9.17 (3.87), range 3-15.

As previously mentioned, children's reading motivation was assessed using the Gambrell et al. (1996) reading survey. The self-concept subscale scores were slightly lower than the value for reading subscales ($M = 29$, $SD = 5.95$, and $M = 33.6$, $SD = 4.39$ respectively, on a scale of 10-40). In addition, children's teachers responded to a questionnaire based on the Sweet, Guthrie, and Ng (1998) motivation to read assessment. The mean of the writing subscale score was slightly lower than the individual subscale score ($M = 2.39$, $SD = .66$ and $M = 2.79$, $SD = .68$ respectively, on a scale of 1-4).

Achievement was assessed by the two items on the teacher perceptions measure described earlier (student grades in reading (on a 1 to 5 [i.e., A to F] scale) and also the teachers' estimates of children's achievement level in reading (on a 1-3 scale). The means (with standard deviations in parentheses) for these measures were 2.1 (.76) and 3.78 (1.31) respectively.

Our study indicated that some ecocultural factors were related to children's perceptions of themselves as readers and the value they placed on reading (see Table 4). Culture and language were moderately related to children's self-concept as readers ($r = .52$, $p < .05$). In other words, the better readers the children thought themselves, the more likely that their family reported active pursuit of Spanish and English literacy and cultural activities. Nurturance was moderately related to children's value of reading ($r = .52$, $p < .05$). Children who valued reading were more likely to be members of families who spent time together and viewed encouragement and affective emotional support as important. Workload also related to value for reading; however, the relationship was inverse ($r = -.48$, $p < .05$). The higher the family workload, the lower the value for reading.

In addition, ecocultural factors related to some of the teachers' perceptions of children's motivation to read (see Table 4). The ecocultural factor immigration was related to the teacher's view of the child as a writer ($r = .48$, $p < .05$). The more the teacher viewed the child as a writer, the more likely the family was to make changes to adapt and hold a positive view about the adaptations they were making to live in the host country. Instrumental knowledge related to teacher's perception of child as an individual reader ($r = .59$, $p < .01$). The more the teacher viewed the child as an individual reader, the more likely the family was to have access to and/or knowledge about institutions, including schools. Culture and language also related to

Table 4: Correlations Among Ecocultural Factors and Measures of Achievement and Motivation*

	Children's Perceptions of Their Motivation to Read		Teacher's Perceptions of Children's Reading Achievement		Teacher Perceptions of Children's Motivation to Read					
Ecocultural Factors	Self-Concept	Value Reading	Achievement Level	Grade	Activity	Autonomy	Social	Topic	Individual	Writing
Immigration	.09	.09	.57**	.53*	.02	-.06	.05	-.05	.16	.48*
Nurturance	.36	.52*	.32	.28	.03	-.05	-.15	-.06	.09	.16
Instrumental Knowledge	.22	.02	.54*	.68***	.41	-.03	.39	.10	.59**	.26
Culture and Language	.52*	.32	.57*	.67**	.38	.02	.15	-.04	.52*	.43
Workload	-.07	*-.48	-.13	-.07	.14	.12	.23	.04	.04	.09

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$

the teacher's perception of the child as an individual reader ($r = .52$, $p < .05$). The more the teacher viewed the child as an individual reader, the more likely the family was to report active pursuit of Spanish and English literacy and cultural activities. There were no notable relationships between ecocultural factors and four of the teacher perceptions on children's motivation to read: activity, autonomy, social and topic.

Ecocultural factors also related to children's reading achievement (see Table 2). Immigration was related to the teacher's perception of the child's reading achievement ($r = .57$, $p < .01$), and reading grade ($r = .53$, $p < .05$). The higher the reading achievement and the reading grade, the more likely the family was to make changes to adapt and hold a positive view about the adaptations they were making to live in the host country. Instrumental knowledge moderately related to teacher's perception of child reading achievement ($r = .54$, $p < .05$) and strongly related to reading grade ($r = .68$, $p < .005$). The higher the reading achievement and reading grade, the more likely the family was to have access to and/or knowledge about institutions, including schools. Finally, culture and language related to the child's reading achievement ($r = .57$, $p < .05$) and reading grade ($r = .67$, $p < .01$). The higher the reading achievement and reading grade, the more likely the family was to report active pursuit of Spanish and English literacy and cultural activities.

Overall, ecocultural factors related to (a) children's perceptions of themselves as readers and their value of reading, (b) teacher perceptions of children's motivation to read, and (c) children's reading achievement.

The Interplay of the Planes of Development: Two Cases

While virtually all of the students in our sample meet the criteria for "at-risk" status by almost any measure, we nevertheless have begun to see differences among them in ways that illustrate the complex interaction of the planes of development as they impact school success in general and engagement in particular. We present two cases here to illustrate these issues.

The case of Guadalupe.

Guadalupe is the eight-year-old daughter of Mexican immigrants who arrived in the United States approximately 20 years ago. The mother and father and

their two children live in a tiny one bedroom apartment where they have lived since their arrival. Both parents work in the garment industry earning minimum wage. The parents are permanent U.S. residents and are in the process of applying for citizenship. Guadalupe's primary language is Spanish, since neither parent speaks English.

The family faces many of the obstacles typically associated with low academic achievement, such as poverty and inner-city residence. Although both parents are functionally literate, they each had less than six years of formal schooling in Mexico. Nevertheless, their children have been academically successful. Guadalupe's brother, now nineteen years old, attends a four-year state university, and Guadalupe may be following in her brother's footsteps. Observations, conversations, teacher comments, and results from the motivational survey indicate that Guadalupe is doing well academically and is an avid and confident reader. She demonstrates an achievement orientation toward schooling and literacy, often choosing to read on her own time during recess in school as well as in the home.

Numerous factors may be at play regarding Guadalupe's success. Despite her parents' limited schooling, Guadalupe has grown up hearing about models of school achievement in the family. Aside from her brother, a number of uncles and aunts finished school in Mexico, and one uncle in Mexico has recently completed the equivalent of a bachelor's degree. In addition, Guadalupe has important models of reading engagement in the home. Her mother often reads in an attempt to learn English. Guadalupe has a large number of books (almost 100) in the home, many of which have been given away at school or been given to her by her teachers. Sometimes the family has used the public library to check out books. Furthermore, Guadalupe's mother has made an important connection with one teacher who provides her with instrumental knowledge about school. The family projects that Guadalupe will attend college; since her brother is in college, they have a much clearer understanding of the educational system. The entire family, including Guadalupe, has visited the university campus.

While there is every indication that Guadalupe is academically successful relative to her peers in this community, there are still sociopolitical and economic factors that are likely to have a significant impact on her schooling experience. The most significant of these is the passing of proposition 227, which is likely to impact learning directly, as well as motivation and engagement. During the second year of our data collection, Guadalupe was placed in an English-only classroom. She complained often that the teacher did not speak any Spanish; observations revealed that Guadalupe was often silent in the classroom and did not participate like other students.

In addition, we found that Guadalupe lacked some of the knowledge that teachers often take for granted because it is so common among White middle-class families. For example, Guadalupe has never had an opportunity to visit museums, plays, or even a movie theater. A poor transportation system, lack of English proficiency, lack of instrumental knowledge, and economic constraints contribute to this situation. For instance, Guadalupe's ability to use the public library as a resource to check out books for reading has been curtailed by late fees for books that the family cannot afford to pay. Arguably, families can avoid late fees by simply returning books on time; however, families may be constrained in doing so due to long working hours, restricted leisure time, a dangerous neighborhood, and unreliable public transporta-

tion. Guadalupe is relatively advantaged by an intact family, parental involvement in school activities, and a relatively adequate supply of literacy materials; however, community and institutional factors are likely to interact with her individual abilities in complex ways to determine her eventual academic outcome.

The case of Ricardo

Ricardo, a nine-year-old boy, lives with his mother, father, and younger sister. They occupy two rooms with access to a kitchen, dining room, and bathroom shared with other tenants. Ricardo's parents immigrated from Mexico; both children were born in the United States. Ricardo's father is a permanent resident who works with a demolition company. He did not have an opportunity to attend school and does not read or write. Ricardo's mother is an undocumented worker in the garment industry—an unstable situation due to economic conditions in the larger economy. She attended three years of formal schooling in Mexico, where Spanish was the language spoken in the home. Neither parent spoke English, but Ricardo had been placed in English-only classes for at least second and third grade.

There are some important differences between this family and Guadalupe' s that seem to impact Ricardo's schooling experience in less favorable ways. For one thing, the family has considerably less instrumental knowledge about the educational system in the United States. For example, our interviews revealed that Ricardo's mother did not have a clear idea of the three-tier system of schooling in the United States (elementary school, junior-high/middle school, and high school), which is different from Mexico's. Nor did she know that completion of high school meant twelve years of schooling. Furthermore, Ricardo and his sister did not seem to have any models in the family for academic achievement or reading engagement. The family lacked an important connection with anyone at the school that could provide them with needed support regarding their children's education. Not surprisingly, Ricardo's mother did not have a clear understanding of the types of programs that her son had been placed in and erroneously believed that the purpose of the research study was to teach the children how to read.

At home, Ricardo had only a few books, and the family had never been to the public library to check out books. When one of the research assistants took them to the central city public library, the mother avoided checking out books because of the bureaucratic need for identification and the mother's fear regarding her undocumented status. This family had also commented that late fees would be a significant obstacle to library patronage.

School records and teacher comments indicated that Ricardo is not progressing as expected, particularly in reading. He was referred to a special education pull-out program (Resource Specialist Program, or RSP) in the middle of third grade during the second year of the study. At the end of the academic year, the family was informed that he would continue in RSP and that he would be repeating third grade. The reading motivation survey administered by the research team suggests that, although he understands that learning to read is valuable, he believes that he does not read very well. Not surprisingly, the family comments that he never wants to read at home and that he looks ill at ease when asked to read.

Summary

In sum, our analysis of classroom and after-school activities suggested a complex relationship between features of the social context and student engagement. It was expected that the after-school program would have more open activities than the classroom and that students would be relatively more engaged in such activities than in the closed activities. Neither hypothesis was confirmed. The after-school program had a higher percentage of closed activities than the classroom settings, and student engagement did not vary greatly under closed vs. open activities.

The analysis of the motivation measures and the ecocultural factors showed interesting relationships among these variables. Ecocultural factors related to children's perceptions of themselves as readers and their value of reading, teacher perceptions of children's motivation to read, and children's reading achievement. Of particular interest was the dimension of instrumental knowledge, a factor that may be critically important for this population. It might be expected that unfamiliarity with American cultural practices and institutions would be especially salient for recent immigrants.

Discussion

Analysis of Classroom and After-School Settings

The similarities we found between the classroom and the after-school program with respect to the nature of activities and level of engagement may be due in part to the structure of the after-school program, since students had a built-in incentive (free play time) to finish their homework quickly. Nevertheless, although these results were somewhat surprising and contrary to the relevant literature, they confirmed some of the research team's observations regarding students' behavior in the classroom. Specifically, we sometimes noted students' relatively high levels of engagement on activities that we as educators considered to be low-level, repetitive, or inauthentic. We viewed these findings as indicative of two points. First, this points to the interplay of a variety of factors that determine instructional contexts. For example, the teachers in our study were well cognizant of the exceedingly high emphasis at various levels on students' standardized test scores. Many teachers internalized this as a need to provide practice to students on discrete skills that might be tested. We often witnessed practice sessions that focused exclusively on test-taking skills independent of any other academic content.

In addition to this, reading instruction was a very salient topic throughout California at the time of the study. A very strong emphasis on basic skills instruction and explicit phonics was also part of the educational milieu. The state's constructivist-oriented Language Arts Framework had been replaced by a "balanced" instructional framework. However, to many, this framework

appeared to heavily emphasize basic skills and direct instruction. Our interviews and observations suggested that these larger sociopolitical forces interacted with such factors as teacher beliefs and views about effective instruction and academic success, ultimately resulting in fewer opportunities for authentic or open activities.

Second, while much of the literature on engagement has seemed to assume a close connection between engagement and challenging, meaningful, and "authentic" activities, the data just described suggest that this may not always be the case. Specifically, it does not necessarily follow that because students are engaged, they are necessarily engaged in instructionally challenging activities that might result in future academic success. This suggests the need to independently assess the dimensions of engagement and task quality when examining classroom behavior. It also suggests the need to explicitly connect engagement to high-level challenging activities—a suggestion that has not always been discussed in past literature.

Ecocultural Factors

The relationships between ecocultural factors, motivation measures, and achievement suggest that children's individual characteristics cannot be considered in isolation; rather, children must be seen as members of families which in turn operate despite and from within the resources and constraints of their environments. In the same vein, we may need a broader perspective on reading motivation— one that considers the interplay of families' values, beliefs, resources, and constraints, since these are at the core of children's daily practices.

Of particular interest in our data was the role of families' instrumental knowledge. We incorporated this factor into the ecocultural interview protocol after observing its salience in earlier interactions among the families in the study. Our observational data was consistent with the findings discussed earlier. The children who seemed most interested in school-based literacy activities tended to have parents who had sufficient knowledge about the kinds of activities that fostered school literacy, such as using the library regularly. Access to instrumental knowledge about school among these successful families was mediated through close relatives who knew English and had successfully attended U.S. schools, or through one particular teacher at the school who was accessible to parents. Parents who built close relationships with this teacher often sought her out with questions about school. However, we found that not all parents who were close with this teacher were able to access her instrumental knowledge. Parents with minimal experience with schools did not know what questions to ask to access support. General suggestions given to the parent about checking that the child did her homework or reading with the child were not concrete enough to be implemented successfully. Additionally, even when parents were able to access instrumental knowledge about school, other sociocultural factors (e.g., families' legal status) often impacted their use of such knowledge.

This study provides insight into family practices related to schooling and literacy development. In particular, it points to the ways that parents' instrumental knowledge about school impacts their children's reading motivation

and achievement. Our findings suggest that schools need to ensure that families who lack access are provided with instrumental information.

Conclusion

The students in our study would be considered to be at-risk on almost any index, yet their achievement levels vary widely. The community in which they reside is in many ways not hospitable to children (nor adults, for that matter). The community faces serious problems in terms of economic opportunities, transportation, health, and even basic safety. Yet, even within these circumstances, clear differences emerge in the academic trajectories of students; more specifically, clear differences exist among these students in their reading-related orientations, motivations, and practices. Past literature on at-risk status appears to indicate that features such as an intact family, parental interest in school achievement, appropriate models, and presence of literacy materials in the home are predictors of differences. However, the resources of even the "advantaged" students such as Guadalupe seem miniscule in comparison to those most middle-class children enjoy.

The examples just discussed raise other points worthy of consideration. First, students in communities such as this one often have different life experiences and background knowledge than many school activities and materials assume. Whether these differences develop based on acculturation status, lack of economic resources, or opportunity to learn is not critical. What is critical is that elements important for school success such as participation in communities of discourse at school that privilege reading (Gee, 1998) and extensive access to high-quality literacy materials (Madrigal, Cubillas, Yaden, Tam, & Brassell, 1999) be provided at school, since they may not be provided elsewhere. Small but carefully tailored efforts in this direction can have significant impact (Madrigal et al., 1999).

A second point has to do with culture and adaptation. As more and more classrooms are characterized by diversity researchers and practitioners alike are beginning to seek new and better ways to integrate constructs such as culture in both concept and practice. In the past, culture has often been treated as a characteristic of ethnic and linguistic minority-group members rather than something that is embedded (often invisibly) in virtually every routine of all of our daily lives—homes, schools, and businesses alike. As Levine (1977) notes, these beliefs and practices are organized as cultural models of how things work and what proper and sensible ways to navigate everyday existence are.

It is important to represent the diversity present among and within groups defined on the basis of ethnic, racial, or linguistic status. Often the deficit-ridden assumptions associated with these labels are based on static measures that fail to capture the wide variability in reading engagement that suggests that other factors are at play (Dunn, 1987; Valencia, 1998). Cross-disciplinary perspectives prove invaluable, since, as anthropologists suggest, culture develops over time in response to adaptive challenges (Weisner,

1984). Gallimore (1999) notes that "Everyone has a metaphorical storehouse of cultural models that can be changed, added to, and even ignored. As circumstances change, these models are modified and changed as new challenges arise" (p. xii).

It is critical that we acknowledge this variability among the children, families, and community in our study. While all come from the "same" cultural background, the variability and complexity we observe belie the usefulness of group labels for explanatory purposes. Explanations for individual children's engagement must account for the complexity and variability present in their daily practices. Their everyday routines and cultural practices, as opposed to static ethnic labels that imply homogeneity of behavior and beliefs, are prominently shaping children's learning and development.

A final point, perhaps most central to the arguments outlined earlier in the paper, has to do with the gaps in prevailing theory and research, specifically the work on motivation and reading engagement. Current models of reading motivation and engagement tend to focus on individual characteristics, including being motivated to read for personal goals, being strategic in using multiple approaches to comprehend, being knowledgeable in the construction of new understandings of text, and being socially interactive (Guthrie et al., 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Though these factors are critical, few theoretical models look at factors we find to be equally critical—whether the parents themselves are readers, how larger external sociopolitical and sociocultural issues such as state and local school policy impact instruction, and what literacy means in different communities. This is probably due to the fact that relatively few studies have been conducted in the types of communities we have been examining. Even when motivation studies have been done in minority communities, the factors examined are typically confined to those found in prevailing models. Even more importantly, current theories that provide the conceptual foundation for such studies and guide the work have no room for larger sociocultural and sociohistorical types of considerations. As our literature review shows, current models are elegant and provide the foundation for powerful classroom interventions. However, we argue that a complete account of learning and development, including motivation to read and reading engagement, requires attention to the interactive and embedded nature of the different planes of development. This is especially critical in communities where sociocultural and sociohistorical factors are likely to differentiate its members from mainstream groups. While some may see these factors as related to or important for reading motivation and engagement, we argue that they are aspects of these constructs. The research that has begun to incorporate and examine these critical factors (Au, 1997; Faulstich-Orellana, Monkman, & McGillivray, 1998; Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1995; Monkman, McGillivray, & Leyva, 1999; Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995) has shown enormous potential for beginning to understand the complex array of issues related to reading outcomes of students in diverse communities. As Oldfather & Wigfield (1996) also note, broadening the scope of current work will require a wide combination of methods and perspectives but is likely to result in a richer and more comprehensive view of reading in general and reading engagement in particular.

Notes

1. We wish to thank Karen Monkman, Atineh Nazarian, Julie Au, and Terrin Ngo, who were indispensable in collecting the data and assisting in analysis for this paper. Finally, we are grateful to the students, their families, the teachers, and the school for allowing us into their lives.

2. "Latino" is sometimes preferred over the term Hispanic, although many authors use the terms interchangeably. For purposes of consistency we will use the term Latino. This group represents an aggregation of several distinct national origin subgroups: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban. Central and South American, and other Hispanics. Mexican origin persons constitute about two-thirds of this group (Chapa & Valencia, 1993).

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About CIERA

The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) is the national center for research on early reading and represents a consortium of educators in five universities (University of Michigan, University of Virginia, and Michigan State University with University of Southern California and University of Minnesota), teacher educators, teachers, publishers of texts, tests, and technology, professional organizations, and schools and school districts across the United States. CIERA is supported under the Educational Research and Development Centers Program, PR/Award Number R305R70004, as administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

Mission. CIERA's mission is to improve the reading achievement of America's children by generating and disseminating theoretical, empirical, and practical solutions to persistent problems in the learning and teaching of beginning reading.

CIERA Research Model

The model that underlies CIERA's efforts acknowledges many influences on children's reading acquisition. The multiple influences on children's early reading acquisition can be represented in three successive layers, each yielding an area of inquiry of the CIERA scope of work. These three areas of inquiry each present a set of persistent problems in the learning and teaching of beginning reading:

CIERA INQUIRY 1
Readers and Texts

Characteristics of readers and texts and their relationship to early reading achievement. What are the characteristics of readers and texts that have the greatest influence on early success in reading? How can children's existing knowledge and classroom environments enhance the factors that make for success?

CIERA INQUIRY 2
Home and School

Home and school effects on early reading achievement. How do the contexts of homes, communities, classrooms, and schools support high levels of reading achievement among primary-level children? How can these contexts be enhanced to ensure high levels of reading achievement for all children?

CIERA INQUIRY 3
Policy and Profession

Policy and professional effects on early reading achievement. How can new teachers be initiated into the profession and experienced teachers be provided with the knowledge and dispositions to teach young children to read well? How do policies at all levels support or detract from providing all children with access to high levels of reading instruction?

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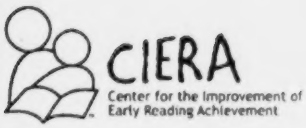

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